DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 079 SP 023 697

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TITLE Reconceptualizing Support Services for Classroom Teachers: Implications for Teacher Education.
PUB DATE Feb 84
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (36th, San Antonio, TX, February 1-4, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Learning Disabilities; *Mainstreaming; Mild Mental Retardation; Remedial Programs; *Resource Teachers; *Shared Services; *Special Education; *Teacher Education; Teacher Role; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

A critical examination of problems in delivery services to students with mild learning and behavior problems points out weaknesses in special education programs. These programs have grown indiscriminately, resulting in over-identification of "handicapped" students. The special education placement system is time-consuming and is not the most effective alternative if the goal is to support teachers and help students succeed in the regular classroom. Special education diagnostic, labeling, and instructional procedures have always set it apart from regular education, and presumed differences between students, teachers, and curricular approaches in special and regular education have been overstressed. Increasing numbers of educators are recognizing this "myth of differentness" and are starting to build a common ground, free from misleading categorical labels for children and teachers, and focusing on defining the common elements of regular and special education. Accepting diversity as a norm for regular classrooms can lead to development of alternative group structures, intensive tutoring, or alternative pacing, and these services can be provided by support teachers working within the classroom with the regular teacher. A redefinition is needed in schools of education of the appropriate relationship between programs preparing classroom teachers and those preparing support services personnel. (JD)

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RECONCEPTUALIZING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, San Antonio, Texas, February 1984

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In considering major developments and changes in public education over the past several decades, it is apparent that scholars, researchers and policy analysts working in institutions of higher education have contributed to change through their contributions to the professional literature. In fact, the literature of a field often presages trends and developments in practice. It is ironic, however, that while some scholars are "harbingers of the future," teacher education programs in colleges and universities seem more often to be reflective of the status quo in education. That is, teacher education programs tend more to follow than to lead the field of practice.

We contend that this analysis, while accurate, is not optimal, and that schools, colleges and departments of education must be in the business of predicting the future in education and adjusting teacher education programs in relation to projected trends in the field. Entering freshmen in 1984 will be new teachers in 1988, and our teacher education programs must anticipate needs 4-5 years in the future in order to provide optimum preparation of teachers today.

In this spirit, we offer in this paper an analysis of major trends in an important and controversial area of education, special education for students who have been called "mildly handicapped," and assess the implications of these trends for all areas of teacher education. While special education for many years was considered the bailiwick of a select few who presumably had specialized knowledge and talents, such is no longer the case. The "special" nature of learning and social behavior problems (students typically labeled learning disabled, behavior disordered, educable mentally retarded, or mildly handicapped) is being increasingly questioned, and presumed differences between regular and special education are the subject of considerable professional dialogue. We predict that the very nature of special services for students with mild school-related problems will change over the next several years, and that teacher education programs must reflect these coming changes in their organization and curricula if we are to prepare prospective teachers adequately for the education system they will be a part of several years from now.

The paper is presented in three sections. First, a brief analysis of the trends in primary and secondary education mentioned above will be presented, consisting of a discussion of current problems in delivery of services to students with mild academic and behavioral problems and some "predictions" based on analysis of these trends. Second, the implications of these developments for teacher education programs in institutions of higher education will be presented, and finally, conclusions will be drawn concerning the most appropriate responses to the situation as presented.

Issues in the Education of Students with Mild Learning and Behavior Problems

The field of special education, and in particular the area of learning disabilities, has grown tremendously over the last twenty years, growth reflected in number of students served in special education and in both real and perceived "power" of special educators within the education system. Today, some 8.3% of students attending public schools receive some form of special education (National Center for Education Statistics, 1983), and the vast majority of these are students with mild learning, behavior or speech problems. It is not unusual to find 15-20% of elementary age students in a school district receiving "pull-out" services of one form or another, and in some school districts as many as one-third of the certified teaching staff are providing some form of support service rather than teaching in the regular classroom.

This precipitous growth in special education has been most impressive from a socio-political perspective. It is not, however, without controversy, and it can be argued that success in building the program has also made apparent its weaknesses, and that major changes in delivery of support services to teachers and students are inevitable. Detailed critiques of special education programs for children labeled mildly handicapped are available (Glass, 1983; Lilly, 1983; Scriven, 1983; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1983) and a complete discussion will not be presented here. Rather, the major problems and issues will be cited and described briefly, and their implications for

future trends in service delivery will be presented to lay the foundation for a subsequent discussion of teacher education programs. For the purpose of this paper, the following criticisms of special education programs for students with mild learning and behavior problems are most pertinent.

1) Resource or "pull-out" special education programs have grown indiscriminately, resulting in overidentification of students as "handicapped."

The prime example of this point is the area of learning disabilities, which has grown from non-existence in the 1950's to become the single largest area of special education in 1984, without benefit of adequate definition or specification (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1983). Students labeled learning disabled are not readily distinguishable from other low achievers in the schools (Warner, Alley, Deshler, & Schumacher, 1980; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Shinn, & McGue, 1979), yet special services are provided to some students and not others based on the presumed presence or absence of a "handicapping condition." Further, it appears that the primary determinant of whether a student receives special education is the act of referral by a classroom teacher. Algozzine, Christenson & Ysseldyke (1982) have reported from a nationwide survey that 92% of all students referred are assessed, and 73% of those assessed are placed in special education. Further, since federal and state legislation demands that services be provided to all students who are declared eligible, special education resource services have grown precipitously without, in many cases, proper coordination or long range planning. Ysseldyke & Algozzine (1983) summarize the present situation as follows: "clearly, it [the special education service delivery system] currently growing at an unacceptable rate does not make sense and will likely not be tolerated as public policy for much longer" (p. 28).

2) Special education resource or "pull-out" services are not the most effective alternatives if the goal is to support teachers and help students to succeed in the regular classroom.

Two points are relevant. First, special education diagnostic, assessment and classification procedures (which have themselves been subject to criticism, see Blankenship & Lilly, 1981; Scriven, 1983; Ysseldyke, 1983) are time consuming, and the period between referral and initiation of service is typically six weeks to three months. Obviously, if one of the goals of these special education services is to provide support for the classroom teacher and help arrange conditions for success in the classroom, the lengthy period between referral and service can only work contrary to this goal. Teachers need help quickly, and the special education placement system is not set up to provide immediate service. Further, when services are forthcoming, they usually require pulling students out of the classroom rather than giving help to the student and teacher within the room.

The second point to be made here is that the very growth of special education has worked against another important condition of quality education, smaller class sizes. Every resource teacher hired reduces a district's capability for hiring classroom teachers, and many professional educators are beginning to verbalize that smaller class sizes would be preferable to more pull-out services.

3) <u>In many cases, special education has become the only alternative for providing supportive services to teachers and students.</u>

As a follow-up to the point made above, not only is the lag time between referral and initiation of special education services significant, but also special education is often the only help available. In many states and school districts, growth of learning disability (LD) services helped to bring about the demise of regular-education-based remedial services, since the state provided partial support for LD services but no differential support for remedial services. Thus, many remedial reading and mathematics teachers "became" LD teachers, and remedial programs were either terminated or slowly phased out. As a result, school systems find themselves on the

horns of a dilemma in which significant resources are committed to support services, but the services are not readily accessible to teachers at the time they most need them.

4) There is a "myth of differentness" and a conceptual gulf which still exists between regular and special education.

Special education diagnostic, labeling and instructional procedures have always set it apart from regular education, and presumed differences between students, teachers and curricular approaches in special and regular education have been overstressed. Reynolds and Birch (1982) described this as a "two-box" theory in which "in effect, two separate school systems were operated, each with its own pupils, teachers, supervisory staff, and funding system" (p. 37). Parenthetically, it might be added that much the same "two-box" system has often operated in teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities, with little or no interaction between special educators and other teacher educators. Recently, however, the regular curriculum and regular school program have been receiving the favorable attention of an increasing number of special educators (Lilly, 1983), and for the past several years special education diagnostic and instructional procedures have been called into question (Lewis, 1983; Ysseldyke, 1983). There remain basic values and assumptions underlying special education which serve as constraints in closing the conceptual gap between regular and special education, but increasing numbers of educators on both sides of the gulf are recognizing the "myth of differentness" and are starting to build a common ground, free from misleading categorical labels for children and teachers, and focusing on defining the common elements of regular and special education.

These, then are a few of the major issues facing those who define, develop and operate programs for students with mild learning and behavior problems in the public schools. Debate over the nature of special education for the "mildly handicapped" has moved out of the special education professional community and is a major topic of

discussion among all educators. What is occurring is a basic reexamination of the scope and role of special education, and it will not be without operational consequences. The following points are important in understanding the current debate and possible changes in school practice, and will form the basis for a subsequent discussion of teacher education programs.

1) Recognition of the need for a basic reconceptualization of the roles of regular and special education in providing support services for students with mild learning and behavior problems is occurring, and its acceptance will have a major impact on practice.

Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1983) have called for a "new philosophy of special education," stating:

> serving all children failing in school is impossible, serving those meeting arbitrary criteria is impractical, and serving only the severely handicapped is unacceptable. We need a new perspective on assessment; administering standardized tests to confirm teacher observations is wasteful, administering standardized tests to plan instructional programs is ineffective, and administering standardized tests to evaluate educational progress is failing. We need a new perspective on intervention; placing students in classes may not be teaching them, students sitting in classrooms may not be learning, and failing in school may not be a student's fault. (p. 27)

Lilly (1983) has called for "divestiture in special education" and a "real return to regular education of the responsibility for provision of many services heretofore considered to be firmly within the boundaries of special education" (p. 14). Regular educators in greater numbers recognize the link between growth of resource services and class size in periods of no-growth budgets in education, and advocate spending scarce resources on classroom teachers rather than pull-out services. Much of what has happened in "special education for the mildly handicapped" is not entirely logical and is not good public policy. Special education resource and pull-out programs are not immune from budget cuts; in fact, they are particularly vulnerable (Sabatino, 1983). The danger is that in reconceptualizing services, the resources necessary to provide relevant assistance to teachers and students may be lost rather than redistributed. In

order to prevent this, the problem must be anticipated and appropriate solutions defined and advocated.

2) There is a need to move away from the concept of exceptionality in relation to students who are not readily achieving under current classroom structures toward the concept of diversity as a normative mode for students in the regular classroom.

Accepting diversity as a basic assumption means that classroom teachers can be expected to tolerate a diversity of rates and styles of learning, to be skilled in providing instruction in a diversity of methods, and to know when those varied approaches are appropriate. The concept of diversity as a norm is not a new one (see Jones, 1978) but remains relevant given the numbers of students who are experiencing problems and the primarily exclusionary options now available for helping classroom teachers solve them.

3) Even if the range of responsibilities of the regular classroom teacher is predicated on diversity as a norm, there will continue to be pupils whose needs cannot easily be met within the constraints of the large class size and classroom structure as it now dominates.

These pupils, who represent a mixed group of under and low achievers, may need alternative group structures, intensive tutoring, or alternative pacing; such supportive services can in most cases be delivered within the physical structure of the regular classroom by support services teachers. Rather than attaching a label to the pupil, it is possible to define the relevant or effective type of instruction needed and to deliver that instruction within the context of the regular classroom (Heller, Holtzman, & Messick, 1982). By locating the services of support specialists within the regular classroom, it is the expectations and operations of that classroom that form the conceptual framework for specialized instruction, rather than the lowered expectations and lack of coordination that often accompanies externally located programs. The fragmentation that occurs with the current multiplicity of pull-out programs can be avoided. And most importantly, the location of support services within the regular classroom would necessitate ongoing interaction of both regular teachers and

specialists. Both regular and support services teachers would need to be adequately prepared to conceptualize and practice their jobs as team members whose main roles with students who are not succeeding is to identify solutions jointly, regardless of who implements the solutions.

4) The most logical solution to these problems is to reemphasize the purpose of support services, and build the delivery system accordingly.

In our view, the correct course is not to declare that special education is the appropriate system for delivering these services, but to build an array of options designed to prevent the necessity of most special education referral and placement. In essence, we foresee curtailments in special education pull-out programs and reinstatement [redacted] of regular education remedial and resource programs. Lilly (1983) has suggested four levels of regular education-based interventions which should precede special education referral. The first of these is assistance from fellow teachers in a problem solving format such as Teacher Assistance Teams (Chalfant, Pysh, & Moultrie, 1979), a method of peer assistance which in a multi-state pilot study was found to solve problems and prevent referrals in as many as two thirds of the cases brought before the teams. Second, peer assistance in the form of individual consultation and collaboration services for individual teachers is needed. While consultation is an increasing concern of special educators, we contend that this type of service can be offered more quickly and efficiently if it is based in regular education. Third, regular-education-based remedial services are needed in which support services teachers (or others such as aides and peer tutors) work directly with students within the regular classroom. And finally, in a limited number of cases, support services teachers could work with students for short periods of time outside the classroom, building skills directly related to successful classroom performance. Only when these types of interventions were unsuccessful would referral for special education assessment take place.

Obviously, various states and school districts will respond differently to the challenges just presented. However, regardless of the particular solution implemented, it is apparent that problems exist with current special education pull-out programs and that changes will be forthcoming. It is also apparent that these changes will have significant implications for teacher education programs in both regular and special education. This is the topic to which we now turn.

Implications for Teacher Education

In describing the conceptual gulf between special and general education that currently characterizes both the schools and programs of teacher preparation, Sarason and Doris (1979) conclude that the segregation of both pupils and educational personnel is "invalid and morally flawed" (p. 391). They continue:

> But where did school personnel learn such conceptions? There are two answers, one general and one specific. The general answer is that they learned those conceptions, and justified them morally, by growing up in a society in which these conceptions and moral precepts were seen as valid, right, and proper. In short, they learned them in the same ways everybody else learned them. The specific answer is that school personnel are graduates of our colleges and universities. It is there that they learn there are at least two types of human beings [handicapped and nonhandicapped] and if you choose to work with one of them you render yourself legally and conceptually incompetent to work with the others. (p. 391)

In the mid 1970's, a significant attempt to broaden and improve the content of general teacher education programs in relation to teaching students with mild learning and behavior problems was made through the funding of the Dean's Grants Projects, which were sponsored by the Office of Special Education. While the concept of "renegotiating" the relationship between special and regular teacher education in support of mainstreaming theoretically guided these projects, the actual goal was more often than not the application of special education knowledge to the regular teacher education curricula (National Support Systems Project, 1980). The preferred mode of accomplishing this was to integrate instructional content into regular teacher preparation programs rather than developing "add-on" courses or independent

instructional modules. While Dean's Grants proponents recognized that renegotiation meant integrating the two curricula, at the level of implementation what primarily occurred was that special education instruction was "infused" into general programs of teacher education.

One of the stock phrases of many Dean's Grants projects was, "What special education for the mildly handicapped has to offer is no more than good teaching." Recognizing this idea was a step forward in the renegotiation process, but no discernible movement emerged to support giving up the protective umbrella of professional specialization in special education for the mildly handicapped as a result of the projects. In addition to the problems the current special education system poses for the schools , continuing to call special education for the mildly handicapped "special" is dysfunctional specifically for teacher education in three important ways. First, it reinforces the appearance of ownership and of a separate, specialized methodology that is effective only with specific categories of students purported to have clearly identifiable problems. Yet effective special education practice for students with mild learning and behavior problems resembles effective practice in regular education. Specifically, methods that appear to be effective with students labeled, for example, learning disabled, appear to work equally well for students labeled mildly retarded, for students who are receiving compensatory education (Title I) (Heller et al., 1982), and for students who are not labeled at all. Second, calling what special educators do "special" imparts the appearance that techniques unique to special education have been found to be effective in remediating learning and behavior problems. Yet the results of studies on, for example, psycholinguistic approaches to remediation, indicate that these methodologies have not been successful ones (Arter & Jenkins, 1979). Finally, it overlooks the fact that in the work of general teacher education, methodologies exist that can be highly effective if they are in fact utilized in a consistent manner by classroom teachers (see Schenkat & Battaglini, n.d.; Spodek, 1982).

In an analysis of Dean's Grants that appeared five years after their inception, we are rightfully reminded that these projects were initiated at a time when the courts were still making basic decisions stemming from the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education case (National Support Systems Project, 1980). In this historical context, the success of Dean's Grants in achieving dialogue between special and regular education and in raising the visibility of special education was an important and much needed prelude to a unified reconceptualization of teacher education. For the most part, however, the Dean's Grant approach allowed the traditional divisions between special and general education to be retained and has not been effective either in redefining the conceptual base for teacher education or in recanting the assumption that special education for the mildly handicapped has something particularly different and effective to offer.

The dual assumptions of diversity as a norm and the lack of "specialness" of much special education practice for students now labeled mildly handicapped necessitate some very specific transformations in the philosophy and pedagogy of programs of teacher education. The current content and organization of teacher education programs will require redesigning to respond to this challenge. Let us consider the future preparation of regular classroom teachers, support services personnel, and special educators given the assumptions outlined above.

The Preparation of Regular Classroom Teachers

If the philosophy of diversity as a norm is adopted, it is not the case that regular classroom teachers will have new responsibilities for a significantly different range of students than is now the case. Rather, instead of referral to special education services as the only option, alternatives which support the teacher's ability to work effectively with the existing range of students in the classroom will need to exist. Those methodologies which enhance the teacher's ability to deal with diversity as a norm are

the ones which would be of greatest benefit to the classroom enterprise. This means that teachers must be prepared to use a variety of methodologies, to judge continuously whether success is forthcoming, and when it is not, to reteach rather than rationalize (Good, 1983). Many educators, regular and special alike, currently assume that when a pupil is not successful, the appropriate action is referral to an external source, to a teacher who uses "special" methods which are not within the grasp of the regularly trained teacher. The immediacy with which this is done is indicative of a system in which the responsibility for failure to succeed is assigned directly to the pupil, with teachers rarely reconsidering their own approaches as a possible problem source (Sarason & Doris, 1979). The expectation that should be transmitted to teacher education students is that their pupils are likely to need a diversity of methods to be successful and that their responsibility is to provide that diversity both within and between students.

A unifying methodology appropriate to this expectation, and one which general teacher educators have proposed and studied in the past but which generally has not been stressed, is the scientific, or problem-solving method. Often general teacher education programs are characterized by a single, narrow methodology or philosophy and fail to provide preservice students with an adequate repertoire of skills, with methods for assessing the effectiveness of those skills or with decision rules for when alternative methodologies might be appropriate. While some special education teacher education programs have been attentive to the need to prepare students to make judgments based on success data, their attention to this methodology has often been poorly received by regular education colleagues because it is usually associated with only a behavioral model of learning. It may be time to rediscover the problem-solving approach to teacher education, namely, that the challenge to classroom teachers is to solve the "problem" of finding the method that works best based on a pupil's

achievement, and that no single method can be expected to meet the needs of all students. Parenthetically it should be noted that the collection and analysis of data to inform judgments does not signify a behavioral approach; in the broadest sense all teachers amass evidence of student success - whether implicitly or explicitly. The systematic noting of pupil progress, whether it be on basic skills or on creative writing, is a reasonable expectation for all teachers; it is precisely this problem-solving approach that must be preserved, renewed, and transmitted effectively in teacher education as a major aspect of reconceptualization.

Howsam, Corrigan, Denemark and Nash (1976) suggest that it is the acquisition of a repertoire of generic methods that will prevent teachers from settling for "narrow techniques simply to 'survive' in the classroom" (p. 89). In addition to these generic skills, specific subject matter, or content skills, continue to be needed. But with a repertoire of generic methodologies as a basis, it is unlikely that traditional content courses will need to be organized as they are at present. Methodological diversity and content area facility are both essential elements for all teachers; however, the purpose of preparation in the content areas should be to apply these generic methodologies to the various curricula in relation to the basic processes of assessment, instruction and evaluation. The combination of a problem-solving approach and a repertoire of skills are not necessarily new ideas for general programs of teacher education; what is suggested here is that teacher education curricula renew their commitment to these strategies in the context of preparing their students to work with the range of students that characterize many school classrooms. What is also suggested is that this renewed commitment will be critical if the present organization of special education "pull-out" services for the mildly handicapped is not available as the primary alternative.

If support services are delivered most often within the context of the regular classroom, a fundamental aspect of the preparation of regular classroom teachers will

include the collaborative nature of professional responsibilities and the specific skills needed for achieving effective collaborative relationships. This indicates practice in group problem solving, shared responsibility for program development, and negotiation between professionals (see Allen-Meares & Pugach, 1982). It also includes work in the area of recognition of problems for which the classroom teacher's capacity to provide solutions is limited, either substantively in terms of alternative instructional provisions or physically in terms of space and time constraints. Preservice preparation in the area of collaboration is rarely a component of current teacher education programs, since the assumption is now made that the responsibility for pupils who are not achieving is immediately assigned to a member of the support services team, be it for the evaluation process or for instruction.

The Advanced Preparation of Support Services Teachers

Tradition currently dictates that support services personnel in the form of special education resource room teachers are prepared from a conceptual framework different from that of regular classroom teachers. Remedial reading and mathematics teachers, when they were in great demand prior to the emergence of learning disabilities as a specialization, did receive and continue in small numbers to receive their training within the framework of general curriculum and instruction. The piece that became the exclusive province of special education was the attention to generic instructional strategies and more recently, to consultation skills. There is no reason that advanced preparation must be an exclusive function of special education, especially since the subsequent role of most special education teachers is to be a support to the regular classroom program. Currently, departments of curriculum and instruction prepare reading specialists and special education departments prepare resource room and consulting teachers, all to deliver intensive instruction in the basic content areas; neither typically interact with regular preservice candidates or with each other during

training (although reading and mathematics specialists are likely to be at an advantage since their frame of reference is inevitably the regular classroom). We regularly prepare special educators for consultant roles who have little experience with or inadequate knowledge of regular classrooms. To continue to promote the separate framework for advanced preparation of special educators to work with students experiencing mild problems in school appears to be deterring efficient service delivery and supporting inflated subspecialization in teacher education.

The cadre of support services teachers necessary in the future would be required to have prior preparation and certification in regular teacher education programs and would take advanced coursework in alternative instructional methodology and intensive coursework in content areas; their work would provide the necessary buffer for the regular classroom teacher, whose primary responsibilities disallow spending preponderant amounts of time with individual students. The skills of consultation and remediation, which demand a higher level of intensity than is likely to be achieved during the preparation of the regular classroom teacher, can be structured within departments of curriculum and instruction. Likewise, preparation for working with small groups of students in an intensive manner and for program planning based on the regular curriculum would constitute part of the advanced teacher education curriculum.

Advanced preparation would include but not be limited to planning assessments based on the curriculum of the regular classroom, remedial techniques for rapid improvement of basic skills (direct instruction), and techniques and for developing learning strategies (metacognitive skills). What it would <u>not</u> include is the disproportionate attention to diagnostic techniques such as assessing modality preference and to special curricula for the "handicapped" which now dominate so much special education preparation for the learning disabled and which provide little functional assistance to classroom teachers in designing and implementing effective

programs of instruction. One minor aspect of such advanced training would be recognizing pupils who possess what Kirk and Chalfant (1983) have called "developmental learning disabilities," or those conditions which stem from neurological problems in children who possess otherwise normal intelligence; for this exceedingly small percentage of pupils, the appropriate remediation is most often teaching strategies for coping with the disability in order to succeed academically.

To reiterate, while the techniques that would make up advanced preparation may be of a specialized nature, it does not follow that training in their use belongs in the domain of special education. Rather, it belongs to the same domain as a strong program of teacher education emphasizing the content areas, generic instruction, and intensive instruction in the context of the regular curriculum.

The Preparation of Special Education Teachers

With the conceptual integration of what is currently special education for the mildly handicapped and regular teacher education, and with redefining the basis of advanced preparation of support services personnel, what can we anticipate the work of departments of special education to be? Clearly, these changes would signify a reduction in scope of the work of traditional departments of special education, which could focus intensively on the preparation of teachers for the sensory impaired and moderately, severely and profoundly handicapped from early childhood to adult levels. Based on conditions and categories denoting consistent, identifiable problems, these areas of expertise warrant specialized preparation in a way that has not been forthcoming in the field of mild handicaps. The integrity of both programs might be strengthened were this restructuring to occur.

Organizational Responses, Organizational Constraints

Unifying the training of classroom teachers and advanced support services personnel under a single framework of teacher education will require some degree of

administrative consolidation in schools, colleges and departments of education. The most distinctive change would be the meshing of what is now special education for the mildly handicapped with what are currently departments of elementary and secondary education or curriculum and instruction. Achieving this is not simply a matter of renegotiating an existing relationship, but enacting fundamental change in which former special educators and general teacher educators share responsibility for providing instruction of the highest quality in problem-solving approaches, general teaching strategies, and content areas at the undergraduate level as well as for advanced preparation of support services specialists. The commitment of teacher educators would need to be redefined to embrace diversity, thus freeing it from the "add-on" mentality which dictates additional, unrelated courses in special, multicultural, and sex equity education.

The implications of such changes go beyond actual administrative needs. Collegial relationships and political alliances will need redefining, curriculum issues will have to be resolved, and extant certification structures, many of which allow specialists to teach in a supportive role to the regular classroom with no regular certification, will need alteration. A variety of technical changes can support these needed shifts. Professional groups can begin to hold joint annual meetings to curtail professional isolation (e.g., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and Teacher Education Division of Council for Exceptional Children). The NCATE standards for special and multicultural education could be redefined as a single standard requiring programs to teach graduates to deal with diversity in the classroom. Requiring all specialists to have prior certification in regular education can also be introduced. The major changes, however, will have to be internal ones within schools, colleges and departments of education.

It is characteristic of organizations to desire to retain the status quo, since doing so preserves a sense of stability even if the organization's effectiveness is limited by its existing structure (Schon, 1971). Changes which threaten the extant stability are bound to face arguments on what appear to be reasonable grounds; these arguments may in fact cloud the real issue at hand. One primary argument against consolidation of general and special education support services is the very real fear that pupils in need of auxiliary assistance will be abandoned totally, putting minority pupils at the greatest disadvantage (Reynolds & Wang, 1983). It is critical to understand that the suggestions offered here do not represent a mere swing of the pendulum back to a period in which differentiation of students did not occur and those who were slow did not receive adequate support. Rather, they argue for protecting the concept of support, but for locating it rightly within the context of the regular program - where great numbers of students appear to be experiencing difficulties due to a variety of problems. Clearly, if students are having problems, then the system as we now know it lacks efficiency and effectiveness. To continue to act as if the problems belong to a small group of students who are "handicapped" is to fail to view the picture in its entirety. Supportive personnel will continue to be needed to provide auxiliary instruction. As a complement, we need to continue our quest for reasonable class sizes in regular education. This means that the funds now distributed under the aegis of special education for the mildly handicapped, and primarily for the learning disabled, will have to remain in the education sector and not simply be eliminated. This is a political task in nature and is critical to the protection of appropriate support services.

Evidence of insufficient and ineffective service delivery to students and the projected problems with the continued division of special and general teacher educators have led to these suggestions. It is reasonable that professionals who are doing the

same things for the same pupils be prepared under a unified structure, report to the same people, and have the benefit of shared rather than fragmented expertise while they are being prepared. The real repercussions of such a consolidation lie in the change in professional identity for special educators of the mildly handicapped, their loss of "specialness," and their subsequent redefinition within the framework of teacher education. The greatest challenge in accomplishing these changes will likely be in the larger universities and colleges which have entrenched departmental structures for special education. Such fundamental shifts may be more easily accomplished in smaller schools and departments of education which have no separate administrative structures in place. Even in these programs, however, administrative unity often masks functional isolation.

The need for fundamental change in teacher education is evident; the question remains whether university level teacher education programs can take on the leadership role in this effort, rather than waiting for external forces to do so - as is too often the case. The appropriate relationship between programs preparing classroom teachers and those preparing support services personnel needs redefinition; while the transition will not be simple, its achievement is a necessity.

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